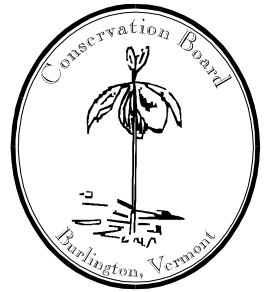


Burlington Conservation Board

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Miles Waite, Chair
Zoe Richards
Don Meals
Matt Moore
Ryan Crehan
Hannah Brislin
Rebecca Roman
Tori Hellwig
Jules Lees



Conservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 4, 2021 – 5:30 pm
Remote Meeting

Attendance

- **Board Members:** Zoe Richards (ZR), Ryan Crehan (RC), Miles Waite (MW), Rebecca Roman (RR), Don Meals (DM), Tori Hellwig (TH), Matt Moore (MM), Hannah Brislin (HB)
- **Absent:** Jules Lees (JL)
- **Public:** Steve Whitman, Maggie Mills (Open Space item) Marty Spaulding, John Askew, Jesse Remick, Tom Broido, John Hemmelgarn, Tom Peterson, Bill Nedde, Hannah Loope (52 Institute Rd)
- **Staff:** Scott Gustin (Permitting & Inspections), Dan Cahill, Cindi Wight (Parks & Recreation)

MW, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Minutes

RC said the 2nd RR should be RC as to the legacy fund discussion.

MW said 2nd paragraph, pg. 3, 3rd sentence, Intervale is misspelled.

A Motion was made by: HB and SECONDED by: ZR

Approve the meeting minutes of December 7, 2020 as corrected.

Vote: 8-0-0, motion carried.

Board Comment

None.

Public Comment

None.

Open Space Subcommittee

1. Open Space Addendum / Discussion with Resilience Planning & Design

Steve Whitman and Maggie Mills appeared on behalf of this item.

SG overviewed the timeline and goals for moving ahead with the Open Space Addendum. Kick off in January. February will start with a Conservation Board meeting pre- public outreach with a discussion of that framework. Much of February will involve public outreach. March will include a review of public comment. April should include development of a draft addendum. Revision and refinement will occur after that with Planning Commission and City Council review of the addendum over the summer months.

Steve Whitman introduced himself and his firm: Resilience Planning & Design. Maggie Mills introduced herself. She's with FB Environmental and is working with Mr. Whitman for this project.

The programs and services of the Dept. of Permitting & Inspections are accessible to people with disabilities. For accessibility information call 865-7188.

Steve Whitman & Maggie Mills presented slides providing background as to their firms and the anticipated Open Space Addendum project. Step 1: identify existing GIS, update existing GIS, Classify GIS Files & Review Documents, and relate to nature-based solutions. Looking for Board feedback on GIS work. Key questions: What are current protections of these open spaces? Any significant changes to these open spaces? Nature based solutions work with and enhance nature to help adapt to climate change. They noted the Climate Action Plan and established goals and strategies. Ms. Mills noted Burlington's work on pollinator habitat. She noted the Urban Drawdown Initiative that is nationally engaged in implementing nature based solutions. Mr. Whitman noted the upcoming components of public outreach, engagement, and education. He's looking to establish a project webpage for upcoming events and comment receipt. He said we need to consider how to best structure the upcoming public outreach meetings.

SG noted the need to figure out public outreach. It typically involves NPA's, but as everything is remote, we could achieve what we need to on our own platform. We need to provide sufficient notice and a schedule.

MW, we would set up the webpage for the addendum work and inform the NPA's of it. Mr. Whitman said he could put together some short videos to post. We could also host two sorts of informational meetings: overview meetings, and then deeper dive meetings.

Dan Cahill, we should definitely let the NPA's know ahead of time. He agrees with idea of break out meetings to dive deeper into content. This is a significant moment in time for conservation in Burlington. He wants to be as engaging as possible.

MW, the city has good GIS, but it's also worthwhile to look at ANR's online natural resource atlas.

RC what sort of public input are we seeking? Mr. Whitman, outreach will be an iterative process. We'll explain what nature based solutions are, but we won't have all of the answers or details. We want to come up with a list of viable approaches for Burlington and determine preferences as a result of the public process.

DM noted Front Porch Forum for getting notice out. He asked if SG has access to past natural resource consultant reports. SG mentioned the resources page on the Conservation Board's website.

Harris Roen, there was a site improvement plan for re-naturalization of the Lake Champlain Shoreline up near the bike path bridge by the Barge Canal. The work was not done. RC agreed that it was a missed opportunity, but improvements could still be made.

SG clarified that we can move away from the purely NPA model and instead use the Addendum website as a platform for disseminating and gathering public information. We can make the NPA's aware of it.

Mr. Whitman said that the February 1st meeting will provide a framework for public outreach.

Project Review

1. 21-0583CA; 52 Institute Road (Ward 4N, RCO-RG) Burlington School Department Expansion and renovation of Burlington High School and Technical Center

Marty Spaulding, John Askew, Jesse Remick, Tom Broido, John Hemmelgarn, Tom Peterson, Bill Nedde, Hannah Loope appeared on behalf of this item.

John Hemmelgarn overviewed the application. It is similar to what was presented at sketch plan review. He noted the assessment of onsite natural areas.

Mr. Hemmelgarn overviewed the proposed site plan. Hannah Loope overviewed the proposed landscaping plan. There is an emphasis on native species. Some nonnatives are selected for salt tolerance.

MM, what substantive changes, if any, have been made since sketch plan review? Mr. Hemmelgarn said that some of the fenestration has changed on the proposed building renovations. Bill Nedde said that the plans have been fleshed out considerably with additional detail, but no significant project changes.

MM, what about the parking waiver? Mr. Hemmelgarn said about a 40% waiver is requested. We don't want to over-park the site.

ZR, is that waiver relative to the total spaces provided onsite? Tom Peterson, yes. Mr. Hemmelgarn said that several E-Vehicle parking spaces are proposed.

MW asked about the soil restoration plan. Is the plan coordinated with urban soils and PCB remediation? Mr. Nedde replied that the stormwater plan is not yet fully coordinated. Looking to retain permeability of the site post construction. Tom Broido said that analysis and project planning is underway. Marty Spaulding said that consideration is being given to capping soils onsite and removal where necessary.

RC, will construction continue following occupancy by students? Mr. Spaulding said that the anticipated construction schedule will be shortened by approximately 11 months now that Macy's is being converted to a temporary high school space.

MM, what about bike racks? Has the "future" canopy been value engineered out? Mr. Hemmelgarn said it's the same as presented at sketch plan. It's been made clear that the design should accommodate installation of the canopy. MM asked if the bike parking complies with the requirements. SG said he does not know – it's not yet been evaluated. Mr. Peterson said bike parking will be approximately tripled.

ZR asked about the species analysis that reaches into Arms Forest. Mr. Spaulding said that the original entailed more disturbance than the present plan will. Mr. Hemmelgarn said the biggest impact of the present plan is the removal of C Building.

MM asked if there are trail improvements to the Arms Forest trails. Mr. Spaulding said he's been working with the Parks Department, but there's been a gap in discussions lately. MM suggested that a trailhead may be appropriate here. ZR and MW said we can trust that it will happen, but it does not need to be part of this project.

A MOTION was made by ZR and SECONDED by DM:

Approve project as presented and restate support of the requested parking waiver.

Vote: 8-0-0, motion carried

Update & Discussion

1. Board Membership / Reasons for joining and hopes for accomplishment

ZR said we've got a lot of new members. It would be nice to know from members their thoughts about board membership and why they joined.

MM said he joined when working for the Green Mountain Club. He was working in conservation and wanted to get involved with the community. He was really interested in the conservation piece and the Conservation Legacy Program. He's since moved over to working for an affordable housing developer. It's good to see new people and new leadership on the Board.

MW said he joined the Board on recommendation by Nick Warner given his background with environmental analysis and contamination. He wanted to be involved in the community and to promote conservation and sustainability.

DM said he joined in 1999. He's mostly retired now. He's been involved in water quality / pollution research for many years, primarily as to agriculture. He was initially motivated by stormwater review and promoting green infrastructure.

HB said she grew up in Rutland and became interested in stormwater upgrades to that city's infrastructure. She was part of activist movements to improve beaches near LA when she moved out there. Living in Las Vegas she became involved in desert preservation. More recently, since moving to Burlington, she wanted to become involved with the community.

TH said she wanted to be more involved in her community. She's interested in building relationships with people and advocating for the natural world. She noted pollination advocacy and grow wild initiatives.

RC said he's lived in Burlington for a long time. He moved away but moved back. He decided to get involved in the community. He's involved in wetlands restoration around VT.

RR recently joined the group of VT Conservation Commissions. She was motivated to join the Board upon realizing she wanted Burlington to be her home. She wanted to be the change she wanted to see in the world. She wants to have an impact on development standards – like native species and stormwater performance standards.

ZR said she was drawn in with a desire to make things happen. She's taken awhile to understand how city processes work and is interested in implementing change for improvement.

SG said he sought out staffing for the Board some 10-12 years ago when he was a relatively new city employee. Instead of just dealing with permits all of the time, he wanted to become engaged with the work of the conservation board given his interest and educational background in environmental matters.

Dan Cahill said that he's found the board to be central to his work and conservation in Burlington and appreciates the ongoing work of the Board.

2. Intervale Deer Management

Dan Cahill appeared on behalf of this item.

ZR said that the intent here is to provide the Council with background and information upon which to make a recommendation. She is looking to speak with experts next month to then make a recommendation for the City Council to consider. Hopefully we can come up with a recommendation in February to then present to the public in March.

DM anticipates fairly strong blowback from some folks. He suggested getting the nature of the problem out to the public before making the recommendation for a controlled hunt. ZR agreed. The question is how best to do that. Our Board meetings may be the place for that. MM agreed that the Board could provide a safe and appropriate forum for this discussion.

ZR, let's talk next time about what the informational meeting will look like and make a plan for it.

Dan Cahill said that it may be best to aim for the public meeting in April.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 PM.